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Identical letters dated 12 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to the grave developments which have taken place today in territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

This morning, two Israeli reserve soldiers were brutally murdered after they mistakenly entered the Palestinian-controlled town of Ramallah. The soldiers were apprehended by Palestinian police and brought to their headquarters, at which time a violent mob of Palestinians infiltrated the complex, tortured the soldiers, and murdered them in cold blood. The entire world watched with disgust as this horrific event unfolded with the full knowledge of Palestinian security forces. There is no doubt that this event could have been prevented had the security forces fulfilled their duty and their obligation to halt the advancing mob.

In responding to this attack, Israel exercised a tremendous amount of restraint, taking care to prevent the loss of life as much as possible. In attacking the Palestinian police headquarters in Ramallah where the soldiers were murdered, not only did the Israeli Defence Forces take steps to prevent damage to surrounding areas, but went so far as to provide advance warning to the Palestinian Authority to evacuate personnel from the buildings.

Chairman Arafat has inaccurately labelled these retaliatory strikes a declaration of war. This is sheer nonsense. Israel has no interest in "declaring war" on the Palestinian people, and it serves no one's interest for Mr. Arafat to portray it as such. Israel is meeting its obligation under international law to maintain order in the area and to protect its citizens.

It must be emphasized that this morning's lynching is only the latest in a series of Palestinian attacks that have occurred since the last meeting of the Security Council. As with other events of the past week, these events are not occurring spontaneously. The Palestinian Authority, rather than using its position to calm the atmosphere and urge restraint, has increasingly made use of its official television and radio to incite its people to violent attacks on Israeli citizens and soldiers. Israel has repeatedly called upon Chairman Arafat to fulfil his obligations under our agreements and to cease all forms of incitement and calls to violence. He has thus far failed to do so.

In another disturbing development, the Palestinian Authority has freed scores of Hamas prisoners who had been convicted in Palestinian courts of committing

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violent acts against Israelis. Members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad were invited to participate in a meeting of the Palestinian Cabinet, an act which legitimizes their commitment to terrorism as an alternative to peaceful negotiations.

These actions point to a dangerous pattern of behaviour by the Palestinian leadership. They are sending a clear signal to their people, to Israel, and by now to the world, that they are choosing the path of violence. The release of terrorists with blood on their hands will certainly be interpreted by other extremist groups as a green light to commence attacks on Israelis. Responsibility for these and any future terror attack lie firmly with the Palestinian Authority. We call yet again upon the Palestinian leadership to rein in their police and security forces, as well as their militias. We insist that the Palestinians act to restrain the violent mobs, and to restore peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations